

January 23, 2001

Liane Clorfene-Casten

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FDA Commissioner Jane Henney  
Dockets Management Branch (HFA 305)  
Food and Drug Administration  
5630 Fisher's Lane, rm. 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

RE: Docket No. 00D-1598

Dear Ms. Henney,

I am outraged by your new policies that merely make labeling of genetically engineered (GE) foods voluntary. Even though tens of thousands of people have already expressed their desire for mandatory labeling and the need for safety testing of GE foods, your agency still fails to require these actions. This new, voluntary policy is an insult to consumers, and irresponsibly ignores strong scientific evidence of numerous potential health and environmental risks from GE foods.

These foods, simply because they have not been tested, pose serious threats to human health and the environment. GE foods could be toxic, cause allergic reactions, cause impaired immune system responses, have reduced nutritional values, and cause irreparable damage to the environment. The agency failed to consider what will happen to human health once these foods comprise a significant portion of our diets. In stating that GE foods are "substantially equivalent" to non-GE food, the agency failed in its duty to protect the American public from the corporate profit motive.

I am strongly opposed to the voluntary labeling policy, which denies consumers a basic right-to-know what is in their food. Without mandatory labeling, neither consumers nor health professionals will know if an allergic or toxic reaction was the result of a genetically engineered food. Consumers will also be deprived of the critical knowledge they need to hold food producers liable should any of GE foods prove hazardous.

We have a right-to-choose the food that we believe is the most wholesome and safest food to eat. Without a mandatory labeling scheme for GE foods and irradiated foods, I will have no way of knowing what is in my food. And worse. You may be responsible for allowing the weakening of a whole nation—whose illnesses will not necessarily be attributed to unlabeled foods.

I will not accept your attempt to make my family guinea pigs for these untested foods. Frankly, Ms. Henney, your accommodation to industry and their profit margins is a slap in the face to the rest of us who depend upon our regulatory agencies for honesty and integrity in protecting us. You have violated the most basic mandates of your agency. It's a disgrace. Your job is to protect the consumers, not corporate power.

Sincerely,

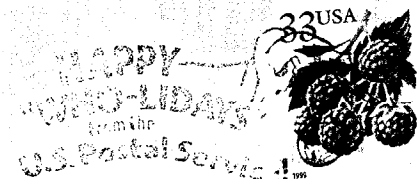
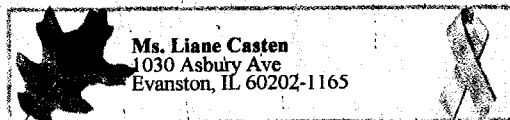


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